



Staff Supervision

Guidelines for Management Committees

In this instance, 'supervision' means the provision of a structured opportunity for workers to discuss their work whilst being both supported and supervised.

It is important to recognise the support and supervision needs of employees. It is vital that staff have regular opportunities to discuss work related issues with a member of management. Regular support and supervision enable workers to be clearer about their responsibilities and the direction of their work. Furthermore, it offers a clear forum for issues to be fed through to the registered person and vice versa.

The Main Purposes of Staff Supervision Sessions

- Monitor work in terms of both performance and progress, looking at work that has been done and how, as well as future tasks and how they will be achieved.
- Evaluate work and performance, examining whether the expectations and standards set were realistic and whether the process of achieving them went smoothly.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses and look at current and future training and support needs.
- Clarify priorities.
- Share information about work.
- Identify and deal with existing or potential problems.
- Provide a framework for discussing and agreeing change.

The role of the session is as a 'time out', to look together at how the work of the setting can best be undertaken and achieved. Support and supervision should not be used as a forum for insulting or criticising workers, because they can feel very isolated. All discussions and debates need to be both constructive and positive. If an area of work is problematic, consider the following:

- What can be done to support the needs of the worker?
- How can the worker and 'supervisor' work together to identify ways of moving forward with the issue?
- Agree a plan of action and review whether it is working as a matter of priority at the next session. If not, why is this case?



- What level and type of responsibility do both the 'supervisor' and the worker need to take for the fact that things are still not working?
- Is the worker fulfilling their duties as set out in the job description?
- Is there something happening in the wider team that is preventing the resolution of the issue?
- Is the registered person fulfilling their responsibility in supporting the worker in addressing this issue? What else can be done?

Support and Supervision is an integral part of the smooth and efficient running of the setting. In order for supervision to be effective it should:

- Be taken seriously.
- Be regular.
- Have an agreed format and agenda.
- Enable staff to have a clear idea of agreed responsibilities and priorities for the coming month.
- Leave staff feeling that they have been supported, valued and listened to.

Workers' Issues to Consider

- Have I done what I said I would do at the last session?
- What have I done that I'm happy or unhappy with?
- What do I want to do before the next session? What are my priorities?
- Is there anything or anyone creating a problem for me?
- Is my personal life affecting my work or vice versa?
- Am I over/under loaded or is the balance right?

Supervisors' Issues to Consider

- Have I done what I said I would do at the last session?
- Is the quantity and quality of work satisfactory?
- Are there any areas of work that I am happy or unhappy with?
- If there is a need for more support, how might I this be provided?
- What should this worker's priorities be? How do they fit in with the worker's own priorities or perception of their priorities?
- Is the staff member over or under working?



- Are there any problems with time keeping, administration tasks etc.?

If there are difficulties with work performance, the supervisor must be clear about objectives needed to move the situation forward. Work problems can easily occur when job responsibilities are not clear. Therefore, when trying to address issues of substandard, over or under-work the supervisor may need to:

- Clarify what the worker is supposed to be doing - using their job description and other relevant guidelines with them.
- Clarify the expected standard of work, referring to any relevant policies eg. Health and Safety and Equalities.
- Discuss whether expectations are reasonable and realistic.
- Discuss and clarify unclear job expectations.
- Delay, delegate or re-prioritise certain work.

Keeping Records

Sessions need to be recorded in writing. Note taking can be standardised by using a form with headings such as, 'Priorities for the next 'x' weeks', 'Things for worker to do', 'Things for supervisor to do'. At the end of the session, both the supervisor and the worker should read the notes and agree they are a true record by signing them.

Confidentiality

Information obtained in a supervision session is confidential and must not be conveyed to others without the prior agreement of both the worker and supervisor.

Reviews and Appraisals

Support and Supervision deals mainly with week-to-week issues and problems that arise within the setting. Reviews and appraisals are different and aim to take a longer, more in-depth view at how staff feel about their jobs, their own personal and career development as well as that of the organisation as a whole. These happen less frequently, and may be more formal than support and supervision. As a rule, reviews and appraisals should be held midway through the probationary period, shortly before the end of the probationary period and then annually. A member of management should have responsibility for keeping track of when they are due and for notifying the staff concerned.